

Such a development would be further evidence of the need to strengthen existing democratic and human rights conditions on U.S. aid for Egypt.

According to information I have received, the law passed by parliament on November 29 would place all NGOs in Egypt, both local and foreign, under the supervision and control of a committee that would be dominated by representatives of the Defense, Interior, and Justice Ministries, as well as the General Intelligence Service, the country's top spy agency. Among other things, the law would criminalize work that harms "national security, national unity, public morals or public order" but leaves those terms undefined, allowing the authorities to bring such charges against any group they choose. Anyone convicted of violating the law would face sentences of up to 5 years in prison and a fine of up to \$56,000.

The proposed law comes at a time when independent voices in Egypt are facing an existential crisis. Instead of passing a new NGO law that would allow both domestic and international groups to operate without burdensome restrictions, the Egyptian authorities have escalated their crackdown on independent NGOs, particularly against groups that focus on human rights, the rule of law, and democratic norms.

Over the past year, a court has frozen the assets of human rights groups and the personal assets of human rights defenders. At least 15 NGO founders, leaders, or staff—many from prominent groups—have been banned from leaving the country. An investigation into the foreign funding of dozens of local NGOs could result in criminal charges carrying sentences of up to 25 years in prison. This pattern of harassment and arrests is not a new phenomenon. It has been happening for years, and, contrary to representations of Egyptian officials, it is getting worse.

I urge the Egyptian authorities to adhere to their constitution, and the pledges they have made in international fora such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, by guaranteeing freedom of expression and association. I urge President Sisi to reject this draconian legislation.

I also want to reiterate what I said in this chamber on September 27, 2016, when I spoke about Aya Hijazi, a young Egyptian American social worker currently being detained in Egypt.

Ms. Hijazi, along with her Egyptian husband and five employees of their NGO Belady, has been accused of salacious crimes—accusations that the government has yet to corroborate with credible evidence in a court of law. Ms. Hijazi has been jailed and denied due process since May 21, 2014. She and the other defendants should be released immediately or provided a fair, public trial so they can defend themselves.

REMEMBERING DAVID BUDBILL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermont is saddened by the death of the poet David Budbill, whose poetry celebrated the simple pleasures of life in Vermont and highlighted the lives of working Vermonters. He died on Sept 25, at the age of 76.

In the State that gave the world Robert Frost, Vermonters know and love our authentic poets. Through David Budbill's 10 books of poetry, 7 plays, an opera libretto, 2 children's books, and many public performances and readings, he became the most widely known and loved Vermont poet since Robert Frost.

He was born in Cleveland, OH, in 1940, and after attending Union Theological Seminary in New York City and teaching at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, he moved to Vermont—to Wolcott—in 1969.

He then learned to use a chainsaw and worked in the woods to make a living, while also writing poems about the people he met and about his experiences there. His first book of poems, "The Chain Saw Dance," was published in 1976.

Other poems and books of poems followed, and David gradually created a fictionalized version of his own community, which he called Judevine—a place where rough-hewn loggers, sawyers, farm wives, gas station attendants, and shattered Vietnam veterans struggled to make a living amid the rugged beauty of rural Vermont. That material was later shaped into a play, also entitled Judevine, which was widely produced, both in Vermont and nationally.

Then in the 1990s, Budbill's focus deepened. He began writing poems about his own life in Walcott, thinly disguising himself as "Judevine Mountain," an old Chinese sage, who somehow was settled on a nearby Vermont hillside. He wrote with the spareness, directness and clarity of the ancient Asian poets he admired. One short example is "What Issa Heard." Issa is an 18th century Japanese haiku poet. Here is what David wrote:

"WHAT ISSA HEARD"

Two hundred years ago Issa heard the morning birds

singing sutras to this suffering world.

I heard them too, this morning, which must mean,

since we will always have a suffering world, we must also always have a song.

David wrote poetry and plays that tapped into and expressed the essence of northern Vermont, and he plumbed these subjects so deeply that they became universal through his pen. His rural characters, Antoine, Grace, Tommy, and others, are quintessential Vermonters, but they are also vivid human beings with the same sorts of hopes, fears, triumphs, and disappointments that we all experience. Similarly, his "Judevine Mountain" poems were expressions of his own life, but they continue to resonate deeply with

the lives of everyone who has read and loved his poems.

In short, David Budbill's poetry and plays accurately, meaningfully and profoundly depict rural Vermont—his place, that is also our place. They have a universality that have and will enrich lives in Vermont and in the larger world forever.

TRIBUTE TO HENRY JARECKI

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Henry and Gloria Jarecki are two of my longest and best friends. I speak, of course, both because of our personal friendship, but also of their efforts with the important Scholar Rescue Fund, a program designed to provide fellowships for scholars whose are persecuted or threatened at home for the important work they do. This commitment is especially poignant, when considering that, as a child, Henry fled the Holocaust in Germany, ultimately settling in the United States.

Both Henry and Gloria have worked to bring about recognition and understanding of people of different races, religions, and cultures. To me, Henry has been more than just a friend. He has been a mentor and a confidant. Some of the happiest times for Marcelle and me have been with Henry and Gloria.

Dr. Henry Jarecki recently received the Order of Merit, Officer's Cross, in Heidelberg, Germany. The Order of Merit is the only federal decoration in the Federal Republic of Germany. This high honor is befitting not only of Henry's history, but of his long dedication to promoting the simple but sometimes difficult principles of freedom and liberty.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of Dr. Henry Jarecki's moving remarks upon receiving this prestigious honor be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DR. HENRY JARECKI: ACCEPTANCE OF ORDER OF MERIT, OFFICER'S CROSS—NOVEMBER 17, 2016

OPENING THANKS

It is a great honor to receive this award from the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Joachim Gauck, a leader honored by Germany for transforming his experiences with totalitarianism into support for freedom, human rights, and democracy. Thank you, Minister Bauer and Mayor Würzner, for presenting it to me. Thanks also to Rektor Eitel for his thoughtful welcome. Let me also thank two special individuals who have played a prominent role in this award: the former Consul General of Germany to New York, Busso von Alvensleben, who is here with us tonight, and the current Consul General of Germany to New York, Brita Wagener.

I am of course thrilled to have so many friends and members of my family here with me at this special event, including my sons Andrew, Tom, and Nick and my grandsons Alexander and Tyler. Most of all, I acknowledge my wife, Gloria. It was on this very day in 1957 that the lovely Gloria Friedland became my wife. After 59 years of marriage, I think she deserves her own award!